

Impact of Secessionists Struggles in the South-East on the Security Architecture of Nigeria

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Abstract

Prevailing incidences of secessionists struggles in Nigeria is noted to have led to increased insecurity in parts of Nigeria. This paper examines impact of secessionists struggles in the South-East on the security architecture of the country. The paper adopted the relative deprivation theory as its theoretical framework and relied mainly on secondary sources of data. As such, information for the paper was elicited via journal, articles, books, internet materials, completed research in related area and other documentary materials. Needed information was systematically and painstakingly retrieved to ensure not only accuracy but also enhance validity and reliability. It was revealed that a large chunk of security issues that the Nigerian security outfit grapples with more recently, are those emanating from secessionists struggles. And that these struggles, with particular reference to the South Eastern part of the country are instigated by the feeling of marginalization. The paper thus recommends amongst others; that the Nigerian government should establish an independent commission of inquiry that will consists of respected statesmen from both sides of the divide to conduct a transparent, comprehensive and impartial investigation into alleged unlawful killings and other human rights abuses of the South Easterners as well as other affected Nigerians, with the view to pacifying and reconciling all those involved, while also addressing key issues of concerns.

Keywords: *Secession, Security, Architecture, South-East, Nigeria*

Introduction

A federal state is a political entity where political decisions are exercised and made at two or multilateral levels of government following the agreed constitutional order of the country. In this sense, one could imagine that this position formed the basis of the claim that "federalism is anchored on a relationship based on consent" that is why Eleazar, (1968) argued that federalism

can exist where there is tolerance or willingness and diversity to take political action through reconciliatory efforts. It can only strive for negotiation, consultation, bargaining, compromise, and agreement between governments at all constituencies. It is the search for unity in diversity, integration, and a platform for development that led to the adoption of federalism as a governance structure in Nigeria.

The structures are a reflection of the avalanche of ethno-cultural and religious groups co-habiting the territory and the intricacies of interaction among them. The Southern region and the Northern region were amalgamated to integrate a multiethnic and multilingual country. But before the arrival of the British, the area now known as Nigeria, was inhabited by people who belonged to different kingdoms and societies, which had their unique traditional forms of political system and structures. The relationship between these entities and their various forms of government has been dotted by many conflicts and little cooperations ostensibly due to the incursion of the colonial masters. Udo (1970) cited in Nsiegbe (2015) had asserted that Nigeria had established well functioning political systems in their respective areas. These ranged from the cephalous political systems in the Igbo land to the centralized political structure among the Yorubas and Hausa-Fulanis.

It was the 1946 Richards constitution that began introducing landmark changes through the provision of the groundwork for federalism by dividing the nation into the North, West, and Eastern regions (Dode, 2015). As observed by Dode, the 1946 constitution laid the foundations for federalism, while 1951, 1954, 1960, and 1963 constitutions expanded and provided for full implementation of the federal structures. Each region had autonomy and freedom from central control. To this end, the regions developed at their paces and adopted administrative features that suited them. The regions had residual powers, and the central government had concurrent powers. Dode (2015) asserts that each federating unit was and ought to be independent, coordinated and exercised quasi-autonomous fiscal powers and political powers.

There was a clear-cut relationship between the main government and its component as each region developed at its own pace and managed its affairs with little or no interference from the central government. It is well known that these regions had their civil service, employed and paid their workforce, and established their form of local administration suited for their region. They also had their political parties; the Northern People's Congress was for the North, the Action Group was for the West, and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon was for the East.

The above situation thrived until the intervention by the Military on January 15, 1966. The military managed the country's affairs using its unitary command structure. The implication, therefore, was that the independence of the component units was compromised by the central government controlling significant aspects of the nation, thus making the states depend on the centre for survival. Political observers agree that the military occasioned a system of government known as a unitary system and this truncated the democracy of the First Republic. Fault lines include the concentration of power and resources at the centre, unfair allocation of resources, and creating more states in favour of two of the three regions to the disadvantage of one. Nigeria's federalism began its decline on the altar of ethnicity, tribalism and religious fissures. Despite mechanisms such as the quota system or federal character principle to moderate fairness in

relationships among the regions and states, the federal structure appears to have been hit in the main by the vicious grip of ethno-religious differences.

The reoccurrences of the ethno religious crisis, group insurgencies in various areas of Nigeria indicate a failing federal system. Today, different groups, especially in the South-East within the federating units of Nigeria, are increasingly contending for their share of the power at the centre. This contention has questioned the suitability and effectiveness of the various national policy interventions, primarily the federal character principle, toward ensuring national reorganization and integration. These contentions have exacerbated the deficiencies in the federal arrangement. It has now upped to agitations for secessions. Different regional groups have emerged. Groups such as MASSOB metamorphosing to IPOB in the South East are increasingly mounting secessionists pressures on the central government. The Western part of the country is not even left out as the ODU people congress also exerts secession pressures on the central government. Even the North is not silent in anyway. All these pressures mounted by the struggles for secession is taking the already fragile security situation of the country to a breaking height; especially at the south eastern part of the country. These agitations, if not urgently and fundamentally addressed, may undermine the stability and security of Nigeria's federalism.

The prevailing incidence of secessionists struggles in Nigeria is noted to have led to increased insecurity in parts of the country. In the South East of Nigeria for example, the activities of IPOB have led to riots, demonstrations, and bloodshed of un-imaginable proportion. Several cases of deaths and adoptions of citizens, including government officials have been reported. For instance, it was reported that; suspected IPOB members attacked 164 police facilities, killed 175 security personnel in its bid to press home the demand for secession (Premium Times, Oct 22; 2021).

Also, the Nigerian Army in November, 2021 has decried the level of arson and killings in the South East by members of the IPOB/ESN (Vanguard, 2021). In a related development, Sahara reporters documented how IPOB gunmen abducted, killed two policemen and filmed their corpses (Sahara reporters, 2021). While the IPOB on its part accused the Nigerian police and other security outfits of killing innocent youths in the South East. All these in addition to several other reported and unreported cases have led to increased incidences of insecurity in that region. As such, the struggle for secession appears to burden the federalist system of the Nigerian governance structure and its security architecture.

This paper examines the impact of secessionists struggles in the South-East on the security architecture of Nigeria. The paper is segmented into five. The first segment is the introduction which is just concluded. The second segment covers the theoretical and conceptual reviews, while the third segment deals with a brief explanation of the method of the paper. The fourth segment is the crux of the paper and the fifth segment is the conclusion/recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

After the World War II, Sociologist Stouffer (1900 - 1960) developed a **Relative Deprivation Theory**. Stouffer first wrote of relative deprivation theory in his study entitled *The American Soldier* (1949), part of a four-volume series entitled *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II*. Stouffer (1960) averred that relative deprivation theory explains the idea of feelings or

measures of economic, political, or social denial that are relative rather than absolute, and it is linked to poverty and exclusion. He further explains that at the centre of relative deprivation construct lies the view that, when people's expectations about life conditions they believe they are entitled to are frustrated or denied them, they are angered and motivated to seek redress for the perceived discrimination. Therefore, judgments about entitlements can only be made relatively as people compare their current and anticipated outcomes with those of others. Stouffer further maintains that relative deprivation is what individuals believe they should have compared to what others have or their own past or future.

He also noted that when the conditions or material wellbeing of groups are not in tandem with their expectations, it fuels human desires for conditions and can spark revolutions or agitations as the group feels marginalized and excluded from the scheme of things. Expanding on this, Gurr (1970) maintained that deprivation theory assumes that feeling disadvantaged is related to a referenced group that arises from the comparison of oneself to others. Gurr believes the theory explains that one is uncomfortable with some standard accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment. Gurr noted that deprivation of any form is a potential cause of social movements and deviance, leading in an extreme situation to political violence such as rioting, terrorism, civil wars, and other instances of social deviances such as crime. From Gurr's definition, it can be deduced that relative deprivation deals with a person's belief to receive less than deserved after having contributed much and the perception that one's group is being treated less well than other groups. The theory postulates that this collective discrepancy creates frustration and, in turn, contributes to the use of protest and sometimes violence to redress the injustice.

These feelings of marginalization also contribute to the 'us versus them' mentality and may reinforce the distancing of oneself from society and become attracted to violent radicalization and of taking up arms against the system. Merton (2014) adduced that relative deprivation is the experience of being deprived, and this results in discontentment when they compare their positions to others and realize that they have less of what they should have than those around them. This often leads to great resentment, disenchantment, alienation, and in most cases, open hostilities with the system that created the deprivation.

Merton noted that relative deprivation theory could be applied to socio-political, economic, and organizational problems. Merton maintains that deprivation has significant consequences for behaviour and attitudes, including feelings of stress, political attitudes, and participation in collective action. Merton added that there are two different categories of deprivation theory - egoistic deprivation and fraternal deprivation. Merton said egoistic deprivation, which is deprivation at the individual level, refers to a single individual's feeling of comparative deprivation or denial of what his contemporaries enjoy. He also described group deprivation as discontent arising from the group's development stage compared to a referent group. He noted that fraternal deprivation might strengthen a group's collective identity. Fraternal deprivation can be seen in the example of racial discrimination that has, and are much more likely to result in the development and growth of massive social movement like the formation of an ethnic-based organization to canvass for redress, request for compensation, and balance in appointments, structural balance and allocation of resources for development purposes.

The theory illustrates that feeling of deprivation and discontent is similar to a wanted point of reference. The relative deprivation feelings begin when wants become expectations, and the society hinders it. This adumbrated further that societal gratification is the inverse of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation has been induced as the primary factor in illustrating societal motion. It is used to explain the quest for social change that inspires social movements, which usually emerge from the collective impression in relative deprivation or denial of certain benefits. This theory aptly fits into and describes the South-East zone's situation as a component unit that integrates the federal structure and a powerful tribe and stakeholder in the Nigerian project. The theory presupposes that given the failure of Nigeria's general practice, some zones, especially the South-East, have been left out of the blueprint drawn and deprived of individual rights and privileges.

Concept of Federalism

There is no one definition of the term 'federalism,' having received widespread scholarly attention. The concept is said to have been derived from the Latin word *foedus*, meaning treaty or agreement. Hence it can be referred to as a union of states based on agreement or contract. According to Awa (1976), scholars used such terms as a federation, and confederation, to describe federalism. A federal-state may be defined as an association of states formed voluntarily for specific purposes in which the units are ordinarily autonomous but work with one another (Francis, 1985). However, federalism is a device for ensuring unity amid diversities; federalism has the following characteristics summed up as the power of government is split between central and state authorities; the centre must have autonomy over specified matters, the state must be given a chance to showcase its proficiency over matters. This suggests that the central and state powers work as a unit, not subject to the other. However, the component units are subject to the central government. It is a principle of federalism that one or two-component units should be robust to control other federal government units; this suggests that they can subdue the other components of federalism. There should be a balance of the wealth, size, and population of units to maintain such a stance. However, all the units must be economically stable; or, they would not be able to sustain themselves nor be in a place to contribute towards running the organization of a federal government. Many factors may spur the creation of a federal union. The federating state should be a joint government; those states must be independent on some issues. This implies that every federal state is a familiar mix between centrifugal and centripetal forces.

Human beings usually do not willingly organize themselves into groups or unions unless they expect some mutual benefit. It may also result from the political association or common political goals. The need for autonomy in certain areas may derive from the dissimilarity of languages, nationalities, political institutions, economic interests, or geographical circumstances. However, all or most of these factors need not be before the foundation of a federation. A federation often arises when several distinct entities with no independent or separate government may constitute themselves into the federation.

The component entities of a federal government system in Nigeria were managed by the British for many years before they were combined into a federation in 1954. Given the preceding, federalism has some benefits, including enhancing the federating states' economic and social growth. The constitution of a federating nation can be organized in a similar way to satisfy the component units. The mishaps of federalism include; increment in the expenses involved in the

administration of a country. Federalism tends to encourage disparity in the rate of development of various sections of a country, and the component of a federation usually disagrees with one another. Moreover, the central or federal governments do not make quick decisions. Federalism in Nigeria is known to have shortcomings making the idea of integration unattainable because of the problems of marginalization or exclusion in the South-Eastern region of Nigeria. The Critical features of federalism include there are two or more tiers of government.

1. These different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its control in delicate issues of administration, taxation, and legislation.
2. The prerogatives of the tiers are categorized and enshrined in the constitution.
3. The necessary requirements of the constitution cannot be individually changed by one tier of government. Adjustments require the approval of both tiers
4. The courts are empowered to interpret the constitution and the powers of the different tiers. In any event of disputes, the highest court is responsible for dispensing judgment.
5. The bases of funds and assets for each tier are detailed to ensure financial freedom
6. The federal government system has two goals: promote and protect the unity of the country; and accommodate regional differences. Therefore, it is essential for institutions to practice federalism in a country. Governments at different tiers should agree on how to share power.

The balance of power among the tiers of government differs from one federation to another. This depends on the historical context in which the federation was created. Two types of paths federations can be created by integrating autonomous states to form a significant unit with sovereignty and identity, and they can ensure security. The other involves a country deciding to split its power between components and the federal government. The federal government is usually more powerful than the states. Examples of countries that practice such holding together federation are India and Belgium. Very often, different component units have uneven powers, while some components have exceptional powers. A federating government has two levels of government. The government is responsible for the country to achieve its goals and interests.

The others are government agents or states that operate and administer independently. Both these tiers of government execute their power independently of the other. The unitary system of government has one tier of government compared to the federal system that has subunits. The federal government does not control the affairs of the state government. The component units have their individual power and are independent of the central government. Scholars have come to conclude that discussions on contemporary federalism seem to have started with Kenneth Wheare. He describes a federal system of government as a constitutional procedure that splits the legislative functions and powers between two tiers of administration such that corresponding areas of competence and jurisdiction are autonomous.

Concept of Secession

The history of secession spans countries and time and will be important in this study for a better understanding of what secession struggles have happened over time and where. Several secessionists, self-determination, decolonization and all other struggles which are all encompassing have happened over mankind's existence. Notable among them are Austria: After seven years of Austria's being a part of the Adolf Hitler's third Reich due to Anschluss annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938. Adolf Hitler had forced the resignation of the Austrian chancellor by demanding that he admits Nazis into his cabinet. The new Chancellor

invited the German troops to enter the country on the pretext of restoring law and order. Austria successfully seceded from Nazi Germany on April 27, 1945. Australia also had secessionist movements where a 1933 referendum for secession from the federation of Australia passed with two-thirds majority. In Canada, there was tension between the English speaking Canada and the French speaking Canada, a 1791 constitutional act eventually divided the Quebec colony into two; the lower Canada and the upper Canada (a division along language lines with the intent to provide each province with its own colony) the upper Canada was intended to accommodate the English speaking settlers while the lower Canada was intended to accommodate the French speaking settlers. This merger however could not be sustained as it led to a deadlock between the French and English legislatures resulting in the adoption of federal system in Canada and eventually leading to the Quebec sovereignty movement in the latter part of the 20th century. Belgium seceded from the Netherlands soon after the revolt which occurred on the 25th of August 1830 during the reign of William I. The reason for the revolt was the nationalist opera “La muette de Portici” which was performed in Brussels. A peace treaty saw to the independence of Uruguay and reasserted the rule of both nations over their land. This happened after a protracted war between the empire of Brazil and Cortes-Gerais. There are other secessionist cases in East-Timor, central Africa, China, France, Finland from Russia, Britain from European union, movement for the independent of Sicily from Italy, dissolution of soviet union in 1991 with each state declaring independence following one another. Switzerland and Ukraine had their fair portions of secessionist movements; there was the popular Ireland secession from Britain and the Scottish referendum of 1990. A couple of secessionist struggles was experienced in the United States of America even though it was crushed in a court ruling and was not to be further deliberated on and most recently the secessionist movement in Catalonia (stein, 2016 Ps 4-7).

It can be deduced from the above examples that secessionist movements are not limited to a particular people or race. Tracing the history of secession back to the African climes, there have been cases of secession and self-determination in the African continent which also shook the world. The state of Katanga declared independence from the democratic republic of Congo in 1960 which led to a peace keeping process and was deterred by the United Nations troops in operation grand slam. Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia after recording a victory in 1993 against the communist Derg regime during the Ethiopian Civil war, Somaliland was believed to have seceded from Somalia even though unrecognized by any international institution. In South Africa, there were surges in the quest for secession which later saw to the division of South Africa into four provinces in 1910 after the Boer wars. A referendum took place in Southern Sudan from 9 to 15 January 2011, on whether the region should remain a part of Sudan or become independent. The referendum was one of the consequences of the 2005 Naivasha Agreement between the Khartoum central government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement. A simultaneous referendum was supposed to be held in Abyei on whether to become part of Southern Sudan but it has been postponed due to conflict over demarcation and residency rights. On 7 February 2011, the referendum commission published the final results, with 98.83% voting in favor of independence. While the ballots were suspended in 10 of the 79 counties for exceeding 100% of the voter turnout, the number of votes was still well over the requirement of 60% turnout, and the majority vote for secession is not in question (source: IRC report,2008 Ps 2-10).

Biafra Secessionists Struggles

As events unfolded, concerns about the fate of the Igbos especially the ones living in the Hausa-Fulani North deepened. The Igbos were massacred in their numbers and systematically replaced in public offices. Igbo leadership felt they could no longer coexist with the Northern-dominated federal government. The conflict resulted from political, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions which preceded Britain's formal decolonization of Nigeria from 1960 to 1963. A meeting was set up in Aburi Ghana as the final option to decide the fate of Nigeria and keep the war away. The result of this meeting is known as the Aburi Accord. The meeting was convened in Aburi Ghana because that was where the eastern governor felt more comfortable with a guarantee of safety. Aburi Accord was an understanding reached in 1967 at a meeting for national unity attended by delegates of both the Federal Government of Nigeria (the Supreme Military Council under general Yakubu Gowon) and the Eastern delegates, led by the Eastern Region's leader Colonel Emeka Odimegwu Ojukwu. It was held between 4th and 5th of January 1967. The agenda of the meeting was Re-organization of the Armed forces, Constitutional Arrangement and Issues of displaced persons within the Nigerian enclave most of who were Igbos (Ojukwu, 1989:P10).

In the meeting, the Members agreed that:

The legislative and executive authority of the Federal Military Government should remain with the Supreme Military Council, meaning any decision affecting the country shall be referred to them for deliberation and when there is a need for meeting to be convened for an issue to be deliberated on, it must be referred to the military governors for deliberations and opinions.

On another note, the council specifically agreed that appointments to senior ranks in the police, diplomatic, and consular services as well as appointment to high ranking posts in the federal civil service and the equivalent posts in the statutory corporation must be deliberated on and approved by the Supreme Military Council.

In summary of the contents of the accord, the federal government promulgated Decree No. 8, which was mainly an embodiment of the accord. The accord finally broke down because of differences of interpretation on both sides. According to Asiodu 2010, the decree No.8 was to be the last of Nigeria but for misinterpretation. The leader of the Igbo region Odimegwu Ojukwu felt the Igbos has been betrayed by the Gowon led government as he was seen as not keeping to his end of the deal as agreed in Aburi. On Tuesday May 30th 1967, Odimegwu Ojukwu mandated by the elders and leaders of the old eastern region, declared independence from Nigeria and announced the Republic of Biafra and it wasn't taken lightly by the Nigerian military government led by General Gowon who rolled out drums of war to suppress the secessionists. Two years on, in the middle of the war, on June 1 1969 precisely, Odimegwu Ojukwu delivered a speech known as the Ahiara Declaration.

Conceptualizing Political Exclusion

Scholars have different interpretations of exclusion, which is the same thing as marginalization. Oyediran (2005) points out that marginalization is a condition of deprivation and the deliberate disempowerment of a group of people by another group within the same nation; this they do by wielding unfair political dominance and control over the allocation of communal resources. This implies that the exclusion is deliberate either due to hatred or to punish the excluded for an offense committed or to knowingly retard the progress of the marginalized.

Eremie (2014) states marginalization is like a complex process of relegating specific groups of the individual to the lower edge of society by effectively pushing these groups of the individual to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally, and socially by the policy of exclusion. This means that marginalization neglects part of the society and promotes unfair access to productive resources and avenues. This leads the societal poverty, low wage, and discrimination, misery, livelihood, and insecurity.

Tony (2014) states that marginalization is leading a particular group to the endpoint of society by not allowing them to participate actively. Tony maintained that marginalization could manifest in subtle or overt actions, including derogatory language, holding on to stereotypes, and denying someone academic or professional opportunities because of their identity.

Musa (2017) reveals that marginalization depicts neglect, non-involvement, or inequality in the distribution of the socio-economic and political resources among members of a group, often leading to protests and agitations for secession. Akinbade (2004) states that marginalization is denying people access to power or social facilities. He further argues that this is particularly the case in Nigeria, where every group complains of marginalization. This ultimately reveals that state funds are not fairly allocated. From the above adumbrations, marginalization means a social phenomenon where an individual or group is regarded as less important and is pushed to the edge. Such groups are excluded, and their needs or desires are ignored while other groups are granted unfettered access to the state's resources. As a result of economic and political deprivation, many of the population are uneducated and remain dependent.

Devoid of the necessities of life, they are relegated to live on the margins of society. From the above, it is explanatory that the functions played by ethnicity or ethnic politics in encouraging marginalization in Nigeria. Achebe (2012) emphasized that conflict occurs when deprived groups or individuals attempt to increase their share of power and wealth or modify the dominant values, norms, beliefs, or ideology. Emphatically, when a group begins to nurse the feelings of strangulation, emasculation, and discrimination, conflict may ensue.

Method

The paper adopts historical/descriptive design. This method involves a critical but systematic analysis of secondary data extracted from discussions, textbooks, journals, seminar papers, academic materials, and other internet materials relevant to the paper. The historical method

examined the past literature on federalism and also on secessionism while the accurate interpretation of events was achieved through descriptive approach which provided insights into the subject matter.

Due to the nature of the paper, the population of the paper consist of all residents of the South East Zone of Nigeria, covering Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State, put at a total of 21,619,400.

That is:	Abia	=	3,727,000
	Anambra	=	5,271,800
	Ebonyi	=	2,800,400
	Enugu	=	4,411,100
	Imo	=	5,408,800
	Total	=	21,619,400

(Source, NPC, 2006).

Secessionist struggles and insecurity in Nigeria is a historical and descriptive work. The analysis of the data was premised on a content analysis approach. Emphasis was placed on graphs, tables, and pie charts data generated. These methods were necessitated by the relative abundance and accessibility of past literature; and thus provide an opportunity to build upon researches that were previously done.

Impact of Secessionist Struggles on the Security Architecture of Nigeria

Secessionist struggles has had several impacts on the Nigerian state. One of such impact is that of security. One of the main problems of the Nigerian government is that it often overlooks the challenges that undermine security especially such ranging from separatist movements until a serious problem presents itself. From a global and international perspective on separatist movement, Uneze, (2016) assert that ‘nearly two dozen separatist movements are active worldwide, concentrated in Europe and Asia. At least seven are violent and reflect ethnic or religious differences with the mother country.’ This shows that separatist movements span the globe.’ Similarly, Uzokwe, (2013) indicated that agitations towards self-determination through independence have been on the increase in the EU recently. A major issue fuelling these agitations is the economic crisis and an interrelated crisis of confidence that is overwhelming the continent.

An in-depth evaluation reveals that Nigeria is yet to get it right in terms of national governance. Brown noted that the political elites often create political styles that are inconsistent with the Westminster-style political system adopted at the time of Nigeria’s independence in 01 October 1960, and that this dissonance makes the attainment of good governance elusive. In other words, copied western-style political systems have challenges in serving and addressing the multi ethnic groups in Nigeria. Despite the replacement of the British Parliamentary system of government by the United States presidential system in 01 October 1979, the influence of the copied Westminster political system lingers on. No political party or system is 100% effective in satisfying every facet of the society, but for positive progress in Nigerian society, the political system must be expected to offer more positives than negatives for the society it governs.

Ekpenyong, identified different patterns of conflict arising from the interaction of political, economic and social instability due to bad governance. Supporting this view, Lenshie see Shettima and Kashim (2011) assert that ‘Nigeria with so many ethnic, religious and sectional groups paints the picture of a potentially vulnerable society to conflicts.’ When tension was doused during the dawn of civilian rule in the last decade, the government saw the need to foster more integration and unity among Nigerians. Part of their efforts was the “federal character principle,” instituted in the 1979 constitution by the Nigerian government to represent the interests of different ethnic nationalities that make up the country.

The federal character principle is one of many policies for the integration of different ethnic groups in the country. It suggests an attempt to build a nation where equal opportunities abound and where every individual can feel that he/she has equal chance to participate in society and politics without the bias of ethnic affiliations. Unfortunately, the federal character principle has under-represented different ethnic groups in Nigeria and has not been fair as it should be. This statement is supported by Bello, who points out that although ‘the purpose of the principle of federal character is laudable, unfortunately, the application and operation of the principle tended to differentiate rather than integrate Nigeria.’ Nonetheless, Tochukwu, (2017) argues that, against the ills of federal character principle, national integration is pivotal and absolutely necessary for the stability of the country.

Many challenges and problems have emerged to put pressure on Nigeria’s fragile economy and social security, factors which are leading towards state failure. The most pressing issue concerning security for the Nigerian people is the issue of terrorism amongst Nigerians themselves. The needs of every person in society revolve around food, shelter and clothing. Currently, support for a separate state of Biafra is resurging in Nigeria, which mainly takes the form of separatist agitation, including terrorism in a minority of extreme cases. There are widespread dissatisfactions among South-Eastern Nigerian protesters with the way that the Nigerian government governs the country. In this study, due emphasis is given to the stresses and strains encountered by Nigerians.

The resurgence of ethnic agitations in Nigeria including ethnic militias such as MASSOB/IPOB of Eastern Nigeria, shows a major problem with unification and a sense of oneness in Nigeria, a problem which the government has failed to aptly manage. Successful states are distinguished from weak, failed or collapsed states based on their performance in discharging the most crucial political goods. The issue concerning ethnic militias is not limited to MASSOB/IPOB. In fact, the antecedent of MASSOB emergence lies in the OPC, led by a young Yoruba carpenter with the advertised mission to mobilise the Yoruba to break away from Nigeria and establish a new state named Oduduwa, after the mythical primogenitor of their ethnic group. This shows that ethnic tension in Nigeria is not an unusual occurrence.

Agitations around Biafra have drowned out other separatist agitations, giving the wrong impression that Biafra is the only separatist threat in the country. The truth is that there is separatist agitation in virtually every area in the country underlying the fact that the foundation for Nigeria’s nationhood remains on shaky ground. Among the Yoruba, for instance, echoes of

separatism come in different forms from a direct call for Oduduwa Republic to those championing a Sovereign National Conference to decide if the federating units of the country still want to continue to live together, and, if so, under what arrangements. In the north, there are intermittent demands for Arewa Republic, while some talk of the “north” as if it is “A country within a country” In the Niger Delta, apart from the demand for Niger Delta Republic shades of separatism are embedded in the demands for “resource control” by regional activists. In essence, there is a fairly generalized feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among the various constituents of the Nigerian federation, a situation that has also deepened mistrust and incentivized separatist agitations. However, because there has never been a referendum in any of the areas agitating for separation, it is difficult to know whether the leaders of the various separatist groups actually reflect the wishes of the people of those areas or whether the agitations are mere masks for pursuing other agendas.

Though there is no known research on the economic impacts of these tensions and separatist agitations, it can be speculated that they may be having a dampening effect on commerce. For instance, shortly after the quit notice on the Igbos in the north there were reports that some Igbos that dominate the retail trade in many cities in the north had already started relocating to the east. It can also be assumed that the northerners in the southeast, who dominate the cattle trade market in the area, are likely to be very cautious, given the level of tensions and stand-offs.

Since November 2015, the South East Nigeria, dominated by the Igbo ethnic group, has witnessed demonstrations by Biafran separatists. On 2 December 2015, the protests degenerated into violence, when two policemen and at least nine protesters, out of the thousands that had blocked the strategic Niger Bridge in the commercial city of Onitsha in Anambra State, were reportedly killed. Several properties including the city’s central mosque and eight trucks belonging to Dangote Group, a conglomerate owned by northern businessman Aliko Dangote, were destroyed during the protests. Since the 2 December 2015 incident, several protesters have been reportedly killed in clashes with security forces in Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt, Owerri and Asaba.

In June 2016, Amnesty International accused the Nigerian military of killing unarmed Biafra supporters in Onitsha ahead of their planned May 2016 commemoration of Biafra. According to Amnesty, “opening on peaceful IPOB supporters and bystanders who clearly posed no threat to anyone is an outrageous use of unnecessary and excessive force and resulted in multiple deaths and injuries”. To be sure, there is now a history of extra-judicial killings of supporters of Biafra, which predate the present government. For instance, in January 2013 fifty bodies believed to be Biafra supporters were found afloat in the Ezu River in Anambra State.⁴ Still, none of the past and present killings have been thoroughly investigated by Nigerian governments.

The immediate trigger of the recent protests by Biafran separatists was the 19 October 2015 arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and director of web-based Radio Biafra, on charges of sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony. The IPOB and Radio Biafra represent the most high-profile and radical movement for a separate State of Biafra that currently exists. The IPOB and Radio Biafra stepped-up a struggle championed by the

Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) formed by Ralph Uwazurike in 1999. Although MASSOB based its struggle on a non-violence pledge, its members, alleging provocation, have clashed repeatedly with police – these clashes have resulted to several deaths.

A combination of state repression and internal dissent weakened MASSOB and introduced deep cracks in its organization. On 30 November 2015, a major faction tried to expel Uwazurike, alleging that he had compromised the secessionist struggle and deviated into the mainstream of Nigerian politics. The attempted expulsion of Uwazurike was preceded by the formation of another faction in September 2010 calling itself the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM), later renamed the Biafran Zionist Front (BZF). On 5 November 2012, BZF leader Benjamin IgweOnwuka and about 100 members were arrested and charged with treason after the group “re-declared the Republic of Biafra” at a rally in Enugu. They were later released on bail. But on 8 March 2014, Onwuka and other BZF members were again arrested and placed on trial for attempting to seize an Enugu-state-owned radio station and broadcast of another Biafra declaration. The detention of BZF members has led to a decline of the group’s activities. However, the weakening of MASSOB and BZF seems to have opened the way for IPOB to continue the agitation. The protests by IPOB have heightened security fears and tension in the South East and Niger Delta regions of Nigeria, and put pressure on the Nigerian government to deal with the agitation.

The recent upsurge in the demand for a separate Biafran State calls for an inquiry to understand why the agitation has persisted, nearly 52 years after the end of the Nigerian civil war, the consequences of the recurring agitation, and possible remedies. Being the longest active separatist movement in Nigeria, the persistence of Biafra separatism is particularly interesting because it could provide insights into other separatist movements and identity-based conflicts in Nigeria. With other past separatist movements also simmering in the Niger Delta and the Middle Belt, as well as the persistence of the Boko Haram insurgency, it is important to study these centrifugal demands in the context of their implications for peace building and development of the Nigerian State.

The tendency for pro-Biafra protests to disrupt economic activities is understandable considering that most of the protests occurred in the major commercial areas of the South East. The media analysis of pro-Biafra protests indicates that 16 incidents involving pro-Biafra separatists were reported in two national dailies (The Sun Newspaper and Vanguard Newspaper) between 28 March 2014 and 14 June 2016. Of these, eight incidents occurred in Onitsha, while they took place in Aba; other cities in the South East and South South such as Asaba, Port Harcourt, Abakaliki, Enugu, Ikom and Yenagoa, recorded one to three incidents.

Related to the problem of disruption of economic activities is the issue of discouragement of investments in the South East. Since the last two decades, the South East has been struggling with a declining economy. Poverty rate in the region has jumped from 34.2 per cent in 2004 to 58.7 per cent in 2010. While poverty rate in all regions of Nigeria has increased in the past two decades, the degree at which the number of poor in the South East spiraled is indicative of the plunge in the region’s economic prosperity. The decline in the economic fortune of the South

East reflects on the number of publicly quoted companies in the region, which is the least in Nigeria. With the absence of formal enterprises, the South East's economy is essentially informal, employing less number of graduates than other regions.

The study therefore summarized that since peace and security are essential ingredients formational (federal) cohesion and integration, socio-economic, as well as political development, 'peace education and culture of peace' must be maintained. All stakeholders of in the South East must stand-up to the task of curtailing all issues that can lead to are occurrence of conflict, while youths must be effectively engaged, allowed to participate in policy decision making of government, and taught to avoid secessionist struggles and acts that will lead to insecurity in the country.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Though the degree of marginalization and exclusion differs from group to group, that of the South-East has become so glaring and calls for concern. This has impacted the participation of the Southeast region in politics. Against this background, impact of secessionist struggles onsecurity architecture of Nigeria.

Nevertheless, the paper observed the challenges facing Nigeria's practice of federalism. Part of Nigeria's problem is marginalizing the South-East ethnic nationality that has sacrificed much towards its peace and development. The wrongs done to the South-East should be redressed. Until the crass marginalization and political exclusion of the South-East in Nigeria are redressed, Nigeria as a country cannot develop fully. Such lamentable expressions like '*ihe agha mere Ndigbo*' (what the war inflicted on the Igbo people) will continue to be a sad reminder of the Igbo's estrangement in a country where they ought to have real freedom just like people from other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. This observed condition has ultimately impinged on the security architecture of the country it has and still is reducing the capacity of the security in curtailing internal conflicts.

Based on the findings and conclusions from the paper, it is, therefore, pertinent to make the following recommendations:

1. Nigerian government should establish the South-East Development Commission to cater to the development needs of the South-East zone.
2. Nigerian government should establish an independent commission of inquiry to conduct a transparent, comprehensive, and impartial investigation into alleged unlawful killings and other human rights abuses of Biafra supporters.
3. Nigerian government should establish an independent commission of inquiry to conduct a transparent, comprehensive, and impartial investigation into alleged unlawful killings and other human rights abuses and attacks on the Nigeria's security architecture.
4. The Nigerian government should set up a high-level Peace and Reconciliation Commission to engage with pro-Biafra groups with a view to devising an effective approach to the resolution of the agitations of the Biafrans.
5. To support the process of reconciliation, the Nigerian government should tone down its threats of use of force against pro-Biafra protesters, apply force with utmost restraint and only in extreme situations, and prosecute violent protesters according to the due process of law.

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